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YMCA

Young Men's Christian Association of Montreal

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INTERDEPENDENCE SEEN KEY
TO RESOLVING YOUTH UNREST.

A prominent youth worker estimates there are now in Canada between 500,000 and 1,000,000 young people who are disaffected with society and its institutions.

"Pre-occupied with militant activists, we sometimes overlook the far greater numbers who take drugs, leave school, run away from homes, or just withdraw behind indifferent masks of apathy", deplored Ray Rouse of the Montreal YMCA's Program and Field Service staff.

Mr Rouse, who this summer spent a tense four months supervising a potentially explosive emergency program in Montreal's inner city, feels that inadequate communication - - either way - - is a root source of the problem.

During that time, he and his associates were involved in placing individuals in jobs, and finding medical or psychiatric attention for those suffering from malnutrition, VD, hepatitis, other common diseases or emotional problems.

"We helped pregnant girls find assistance, tried to re-direct disillusioned youngsters, sought to find creative and healthy ways in which individuals could express themselves, 'talked-down' drug users, reasoned with the militants, and generally worked to promote constructive dialogue," said Mr. Rouse. ...

"Many of these alienated young people see organized society as conservative, ultra-materialistic, impersonal, non-caring for the individual and apathetic towards social issues of the day," he reported.

"They regard businessmen as people to be mistrusted, dogmatic, difficult to change, insecure in many ways, cloistered and not really aware of what is going on in the world", he told a Canadian Potato Chip Luncheon in the Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

He emphasized the impossibility of trying to close the communications gap by encouraging 'sameness', and rejected policies which try to isolate different groups.

"About the only way now open is to make everyone aware of their inter-dependence," he suggested. "But for this to work, individuality and conflict over differences would have to be viewed as creative, helpful and contributing positively to the development of sound relationships and trust between people."

For further information, please contact:

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